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Unemployment Survey, 1914-1915. American Labor Legislation Review, Vol. V, No. 3 (Nov., 1915). (New York: American Association for Labor Legislation. 1915. Pp. 157. \$1.)

Report of the Ontario Commission on Unemployment. Parts I to IV and Appendix. (Toronto: Legislative Assembly of Ontario. 1916. Pp. 334.)

The Unemployed in Philadelphia. By JOSEPH H. WILLITS. (Philadelphia: Department of Public Works. 1915. Pp. 170.)

These three reports represent three distinct types of writing on the problem of unemployment. The *Unemployment Survey* of the American Association of Labor Legislation is the most common and the traditional form of American writing on the subject. It is an uncritical record of all the various attempts and near-attempts to care for the unemployed during the depression of 1914-1915. Quite the opposite is the report of the Ontario Commission. Here we have a critical analysis of the available data on unemployment with generalizations as to underlying causes and recommendations based on these generalizations. The report of Mr. Willits emphasizes responsibility of employers, and represents the latest development in the literature of the subject. It takes up the cry of the efficiency engineers, urging employers to regularize their work, systematize methods of hiring and discharge, and by these means make work more steady.

"For the first time, on a country-wide scale, community efforts were unified and directed into practical channels through something more than ephemeral organization," says the report of the Association for Labor Legislation. And "in order that the painful lessons of the winter of 1914-1915 may be utilized and not forgotten—in the belief that it is the light of practical experience which still guides most leaders along the path of social progress"—the report of the association was published. It gathers together the estimates of the number of unemployed in various cities throughout the country, and summarizes the special investigations made by committees, civic bodies, and by the government. It describes the forms of emergency relief, employment offices, public work, and regularization of industry by employers adopted in different places; and ends with a set of "standard recommendations on measures to be taken and to be avoided in the relief and prevention of unemployment."

One wonders how much value there is in a compilation like this. The depression of 1914-1915 was not unique in stimulating relief

activities and arousing public interest in the problem of unemployment. The hard times of 1892-1893 and 1907-1908 brought similar results, and Dr. C. C. Closson in 1894 published in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* just such an "Unemployment Survey" as the one under review. Nevertheless, the same unpreparedness, the same confusion, the same mixing of charity with unemployment measures that occurred in 1892-1893 was repeated in 1914-1915. It seems that little is to be hoped from the "light of practical experience" of this kind. Perhaps if social workers concentrated their efforts on creating government machinery for dealing with unemployment (which they have discountenanced until quite recent years), we should be farther along.

The Report of the Ontario Commission on Unemployment is a real contribution to the subject, no matter how much we may disagree with its conclusions. The commission studied the facts of unemployment in Canada to a purpose. It finds "that the depression, which occurred in 1914 and 1915, was but a phase of the movement alternating between inflation and depression, which is the characteristic feature of modern industry" (p. 9); and it recommends a permanent labor commission to deal with the problem in the province of Ontario and to further a movement for action by the national government.

First among the conclusions is that there has been in Canada a development of markets that is disproportionate to the development of production. Railroads and industrial plants have been multiplied without regard to the actual demand for transportation and products. As a remedy the commission urges the establishment of diversified industries in Canada and an organized effort to get foreign markets. The government is not only to take a leading part in these efforts, but it must also regulate its own spending so as to offset the recurring periods of depression in private industry; and the regularization of employment by private employers is also urged. As a final measure for the prevention of unemployment the commission recommends "community settlements" on the land with government aid and supervision, cheap transportation to enable city workers to live in the country, and assistance to them in acquiring small holdings.

To increase the mobility of labor a system of public labor exchanges is advocated and a plan of organization recommended for immediate adoption. Coupled with this are recommendations for cheap transportation for laborers, and taxation of land held for

speculative purposes. Regulation of immigration, special measures for dealing with unemployed women, and vocational training are urged as means of dealing with the personal causes of unemployment. And subsidies to unions or other organizations of workers who have out-of-work benefits is recommended as the best form of unemployment insurance.

All of Part I of this report deals with the analysis of the data collected by the commission, its conclusions and recommendations. Parts II, III, and IV give the facts. On this side of the Atlantic we have had so few attempts at seriously analyzing the facts of unemployment that this report is decidedly welcome.

Mr. Willits' report on *The Unemployed in Philadelphia* has a frontispiece which every student of the problem of unemployment should see. It shows a revolving board with workers jumping on and being thrown off, and the legend says: "The Industrial Roulette Wheel—Off Again—On Again—Fired Again." The author intended this as a rebuke to employers who have a large "turnover" of labor due to needless discharging and hiring of men. But it would be well if we substituted this picture for the ordinary one of "The Army of the Unemployed" when we do our thinking on unemployment in general; for this industrial roulette wheel accurately describes the problem, while the "standing army of the unemployed" is a fiction.

The Philadelphia report contains some excellent studies of irregularity of employment in specific industries, particularly in the textile industry. Facts showing the changes in industry which make for irregularity are interestingly and graphically presented. The numerous charts illustrating irregularity of employment add greatly to the value of the report.

For the purpose he has in hand, the author's assumption that employers must take the leading part in dealing with unemployment is no doubt justifiable. He wants to interest the employer of labor in making his work more steady; so he writes: "Unemployment is a problem of industry; and as such can only effectively be handled by those in charge of industry: employers." This leads him also to minimize the part that the government might play in solving the problem.

But surely we have had experience enough with employers' liability and workmen's compensation legislation to see that we can not depend on the employer to handle any problem like this. It was wasteful and bad business to kill and injure workmen at

any time, but employers as a class were not convinced until workmen's compensation laws placed the burden directly on them. Similarly, most employers will not see the value of keeping their forces steadily employed as long as most of the burden of unemployment is borne by the worker. Moreover, the assumption that irregular employment does not pay the employer is quite often unwarranted. In highly seasonal trades, such as women's clothing, employers often find it more profitable to manufacture high priced garments of the latest styles for only a few months of the year rather than to work the year around on cheap garments, because big profits on the former more than offset the losses of long slack seasons.

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Minimum Wage Legislation in Australasia. By PAUL STANLEY COLLIER. Reprinted from Appendix VIII of the *Fourth Report of the New York Factory Investigating Commission*. (Albany: J. B. Lyon Company, Printers. 1915. Pp. 1845-2268.)

Owing to the fact that it appears as an appendix to a voluminous public document and is therefore not likely to be separately mentioned in publishers' lists and library catalogues, it is to be feared that this valuable monograph, written as a doctor's dissertation at Columbia University, will escape the notice of many persons interested in the movement for a minimum wage. It furnishes the most complete account of the Australasian efforts to regulate wages and working conditions by means of compulsory arbitration courts and wages boards that has yet appeared in the English language. While Dr. Collier has not visited Australia and New Zealand and his book lacks that familiar touch with the administrative workings of the laws which comes only to the field investigator, he has had access to practically all the literature, official and otherwise, dealing with his subject and has supplemented the information gained in this way by interviews and correspondence with public officials in Australia and others who have had first-hand knowledge of the laws and their administration. He has thus succeeded in a remarkable way not only in his presentation of the facts concerning minimum wage legislation but in his appreciation of the significance of the important changes in laws and of the effects of court decisions. A careful reading of